

Item: 4

Human Resources Sub-committee: 7 November 2019.

Human Resources – Annual Overview.

Report by Executive Director of Corporate Services.

1. Purpose of Report

To advise on key data relating to the Council's workforce and human resources related activity for financial year 2018 to 2019.

2. Recommendations

The Sub-committee is invited to scrutinise:

2.1.

The statistics and data relating to the Council's workforce and human resource activities, as outlined in sections 5 to 7 of this report.

3. Introduction

Although some elements of workforce data are reported to Service committees as performance indicators on a six monthly basis, in terms of the Scheme of Administration, the Human Resources Sub-committee should receive an annual overview report covering key areas of information on the workforce and transactional activity.

4. Background

Officers have selected some key areas of data that are currently available and are considered useful. The first report of this type was reported to the Human Resources Sub-committee on 31 May 2018, however the inclusion of more detailed sickness absence information in this year's report necessitated a delay to a later committee cycle this year.

5. Human Resources Transactional Activity

5.1.

There is a number of key transactional activities around workforce management and recruitment which are undertaken or co-ordinated by HR and Performance which are not generally brought to the attention of Elected Members as they are operational in nature. However, officers felt it would be useful to provide an overview of these and then continue in future years so that a trend analysis can be built up.

5.2.

The undernoted table provides statistical information on volume of certain key activities. For the number of posts advertised, the number quoted is the number of adverts posted. It does not show where multiple or duplicate jobs are advertised in one post.

Process.	2016 to 2017.	2017 to 2018.	2018 to 2019.
Number of posts advertised.	585 (130 re-advertised).	719 (152 re-advertised).	764 (223 re-advertised).
Number of offers made.	792.	835.	705.
Number of applicants.	3,872.	3,665.	3,008.
Number of Protecting Vulnerable Groups Forms processed.	364.	409.	384.
Number of Change in Establishment Forms processed.	568.	562.	479.
Occupational Health referrals.	105.	97.	106.

5.3.

The statistics above are useful in underlining the increased difficulties in recruitment that the Council is experiencing with reduced numbers of applicants and increased numbers of jobs that need to be re-advertised due to an inability to recruit. Some posts need to be re-advertised on multiple occasions.

5.4.

This recruitment challenge has been the topic of recent workshops within the Corporate Management Team with senior management and Human Resources officers looking to make improvements in terms of streamlining processes and procedures around recruitment wherever possible, and by trying new initiatives in terms of the Council's approach to attracting candidates.

5.5.

In addition to the difficulties this can pose for delivering services, the increased workload poses a challenge for Human Resources to manage and co-ordinate the increasing activity.

5.6.

There are formal staff management and support processes which every organisation has to undertake, including disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work processes. Details on volume of these are detailed in Appendix 1 along with relevant commentary and analysis.

6. Workforce numbers

6.1.

The total full-time equivalent workforce as at 31 March 2019 is shown below, split by gender. This includes all established posts, permanent and temporary. Workforce numbers have remained largely stable over the past 12 months, with the overall total showing a marginal increase of 5 FTE from the end of 2017 to 2018.

Full time equivalent workforce split by service and gender.			
Service.	Female.	Male.	Total.
Chief Executive's Service.	58.26.	17.80.	76.06.
Corporate Services.	116.74.	47.11.	163.85.
Development and Infrastructure.	69.50.	259.28.	328.78.
Education, Leisure and Housing.	451.66.	164.74.	616.40.
Orkney Health and Care.	337.84.	60.18.	398.02.
Grand Total.	1033.99.	549.10.	1583.11.

6.2.

In addition to staff with contracted set hours, the Council continues to engage a number of relief employees on flexible contracts who are called upon to undertake work as and when required. These are essential in a community like Orkney where the size of services can sometimes mean building in contracted cover is not practicable.

Relief posts split by service and gender (main posts, all reliefs counted only once).			
Service.	Female.	Male.	Total.
Chief Executive's Service.	4.	1.	5.
Corporate Services.	44.	9.	53.
Development and Infrastructure.	11.	53.	64.
Education, Leisure and Housing.	248.	114.	362.
Orkney Health and Care.	158.	22.	180.
Grand total.	465.	199.	664.

6.3.

Another useful measure of staffing numbers is the quarterly staffing watch figures which require to be provided to the Office for National Statistics. These figures represent hours of work actually undertaken in the quarter, by all staff, contracted or relief. A summary of this, together with trends over the past 10 years, is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

6.4.

Turnover figures are monitored to highlight any potential areas of concern in terms of staff retention. These figures are based on permanent contracted staff only and leavers are counted as those who leave the organisation, rather than those who move to another job within it. The overall level of turnover has reduced from 5% in 2017 to 2018 to 4% in 2018 to 2019 and therefore remains within acceptable limits.

Turnover split by service.			
Service.	Leavers.	Permanent Staff.	Turnover.
Chief Executive's Service.	5.	72.	6.9%
Corporate Services.	8.	237.	3.4%
Development and Infrastructure.	16.	338.	4.7%
Education, Leisure and Housing.	21.	718.	2.9%
Orkney Health and Care.	23.	480.	4.8%
Grand total.	73.	1845.	4.0%

6.5.

In addition to turnover on permanent posts, it has been requested by Elected Members when relevant turnover performance indicators have been discussed at service committees that the turnover of temporary staff is also monitored. Figures are available for this year as follows:

Staff resigning from temporary contracts and leaving the Council, relative to expected end date.					
Service.	Headcount of Temporary Employees.	Before end date.	On end date.	After end date.	Total.
Chief Executive's Service	26	2	0	1	3
Corporate Services	19	2	0	0	2
Development and Infrastructure.	31	4	0	1	5
Education, Leisure and Housing.	170	7	4	1	12
Orkney Health and Care.	69	2	1	4	7
Grand total.	315	17	5	7	29

Staff resigning from temporary contracts and leaving the Council, relative to expected end date, expressed as a percentage.

Service.	Before end date.	On end date.	After end date.	Total.
Chief Executive's Service	7.7%	0	3.8%	11.5%
Corporate Services	10.5%	0	0	10.5%
Development and Infrastructure.	12.9%	0	3.2%	16.1%
Education, Leisure and Housing.	4.1%	2.4%	0.6%	7.1%
Orkney Health and Care.	2.9%	1.4%	5.8%	10.1%
Grand total.	5.4%	1.6%	2.2%	9.2%

7. Sickness Absence

7.1.

The data for the statutory performance indicator on sickness absence requires to be submitted to the Improvement Service by 31 August each year for the preceding financial year. This has been done, however it will be into early 2020 before benchmarking data is published.

7.2.

In terms of absence rates, the Council has historically performed well on the general staffing data, consistently benchmarking in the top quartile against all other Scottish local authorities. The Council has performed less well on the Teacher only category. From the data gathered and submitted, there has been an increase in the Council's absence rates in 2018 to 2019 compared to 2017 to 2018, however it is not known yet how that compares with other local authorities. This information will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee as part of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework reports in 2020.

7.3.

In the meantime, additional analysis of sickness absence figures for 2018 to 2019 has been undertaken to look at reasons for absence, and this is included as Appendix 3 to this report.

7.4.

One area of concern for the Council has been absence due to stress or other mental ill health. Some data on this has been reported through the annual health and safety report in previous years, however a more detailed breakdown has been included as part of this report.

7.5.

The figures show that approximately 1% of Council staff had to take time off owing to work related stress, and that such absences tended to be long-term, i.e. longer than 4 weeks. In terms of stress related absences, approximately half of the days lost were attributable to work related reasons and half due to personal stressors.

7.6.

In terms of reasons for absence, musculoskeletal and minor illnesses continue to be the most common causes for employees needing time off from work.

7.7.

Sickness absence is carefully monitored through the Council's sickness absence processes, and various training courses are regularly offered to all staff in relation to stress and mental health awareness. Proactive health and safety campaigns for staff have been initiated, focusing on the following:

- Stress / mental health awareness.
- Musculoskeletal injuries.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Zero tolerance for harassment in the workplace.

8. Human Resource Implications

8.1.

Having the correct data and metrics on the workforce is an important part of informing strategic and operational decision making, including workforce planning.

8.2.

It is an area officers are keen to develop within existing resources, and work to improve systems is ongoing through the Innovation Fund project on developing the Human Resources and Payroll system.

9. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with governance and its duties as an employer and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

10. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. It is worth noting that workforce represents the largest single cost to the Authority, with staff salaries and associated employment costs representing 48% of General Fund budgeted expenditure for financial year 2018 to 2019.

11. Legal Aspects

11.1.

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

11.2.

Under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should be excluded from the meeting in respect of any discussion relating to Appendices 1 and 3 to this report. Appendices 1 and 3 contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

12. Contact Officers

Gillian Morrison, Executive Director of Corporate Services, extension 2103, Email gillian.morrison@orkney.gov.uk.

Andrew Groundwater, Head of HR and Performance, extension 2253, Email andrew.groundwater@orkney.gov.uk.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Data on formal HR processes 2017 to 2019.

Appendix 2 – Staffing Watch figures summary 2009 to 2019.

Appendix 3 – Sickness Absence 2018 to 2019 analysis.